

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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UNCLAS BREMEN 229

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/CE AND INR/REU

E.O. 11652: N/A
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SUBJECT: LAND BREMEN SPD CONVENTION REELECTS SCHERF TO
CHAIRMANSHIP

1. ON APRIL 8, THE 183 DELEGATES OF THE LAND BREMEN SPD CONVENTION REELECTED THE 39-YEAR OLD DR. HENNING SCHERF (LEFT CENTER) TO THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE BREMEN SPD FOR HIS FOURTH TERM. HE OBTAINED 120 VOTES AGAINST 55, WITH 8 ABSTENTIONS. THE NUMBER OF VOTES OPPOSING SCHERF, PLUS THE ABSTENTIONS, WERE SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER THAN TWO YEARS AGO (35 PERCENT VERSUS 23 PERCENT OF THOSE VOTING). ALTHOUGH THE STRENGTH RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MODERATES AND LEFTISTS IN THE NEWLY ELECTED LAND BOARD REMAINED BASICALLY UNCHANGED (ABOUT TWO THIRDS TO ONE THIRD RESPECTIVELY), THE BALANCE OF STRENGTH BETWEEN THE TWO WINGS AMONG THE UNCLASSIFIED

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DELEGATES WAS GREATER IN FAVOR OF THE LEFTISTS THAN BEFORE.

2. HANS KOSCHNICK, MAYOR OF BREMEN AND SPD NATIONAL VICE CHAIRMAN, DELIVERED THE KEYNOTE ADDRESS, IN LIEU OF WILLY BRANDT, WHO CANCELLED LAST MINUTE ON ACCOUNT OF AN OUT-OF-COUNTRY COMMITMENT. ASSESSING THE PRESENT STATE OF THE SPD/FDP COALITION IN BONN, KOSCHNICK SAID: " THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT

WE HAD SOME DIFFICULTIES IN THE COOPERATION WITH OUR LIBERAL COALITION PARTNER IN THE RECENT PAST. HOWEVER, IN MY OPINION, WE HAVE NO REASON TO DRAMATIZE THESE PROBLEMS. THE COALITION HAS STABILIZED, AND THE CHANCES FOR A CONTINUED CONSTRUCTIVE COOPERATION WITH THE FDP ARE GOOD. HOWEVER, BOTH COALITION PARTNERS SHOULD KNOW THAT THEY MUST BRING ALL MEN ON BOARD WHEN IMPORTANT DECISIONS ARE TO BE TAKEN IN THE BUNDESTAG. ESPECIALLY WE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS MUST ASK OURSELVES WHETHER WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN VERY RELIABLE IN THIS RESPECT. IN ANY CASE, IT IS INDISPENSABLE FOR THE SPD TO SUPPORT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE SPD CANNOT IMPLEMENT ALL ITS POLICIES; OTHERWISE THE OPPOSITION WILL SUCCEED TO POWER". KOSCHNICK CALLED ON HIS PARTY TO SUPPORT IN FORTH-COMING LAND ELECTIONS THE COALITIONS IN THOSE LAENDER IN WHICH THE SPD AND FDP SHARE POWER (HAMBURG, HESSEN) AND TO GIVE ACTIVE ELECTION SUPPORT TO THE SPD IN THE LAENDER (LOWER SAXONY) IN WHICH IT IS IN THE OPPOSITION. HE MADE CLEAR THAT THE SPD AND FDP WILL NOT BE ABLE TO CONTINUE THEIR REFORM POLICIES AS LONG AS THE CDU/CSU HAS THE MAJORITY IN THE BUNDESRAAT. AS FAR AS BREMEN IS CONCERNED, KOSCHNICK SAID: " ALTHOUGH I MAINTAIN GOOD PERSONAL RELATIONS WITH THE FDP, I SHALL NOT VOLUNTARILY YIELD THE SPD'S ABSOLUTE MAJORITY IN THE 1979 LAND ELECTIONS".

3. COMMENT: SCHERF, THE ONLY SPD LAND CHAIRMAN IN THE FRG ELECTED TO A FOURTH TERM, HAD NO OPPOSING CANDIDATE FOR THE UNCLASSIFIED

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POSITION. THE MODERATES (I.E. MOST SENATORS, THE TRADE UNION WING, AND THE BREMERHAVEN DELEGATES), HEADED BY BUERGERSCHAFT PRESIDENT DR. DIETER KLINK, HAD ABANDONED THE IDEA OF NOMINATING THEIR OWN CANDIDATE, NOT BEING CERTAIN OF THEIR STRENGTH AND PROSPECTS OF WINNING. THE RELATIVE "HARMONY" AT THE CONVENTION COULD NOT CAMOUFLAGE THE FACT THAT THE MODERATES' VEXATION HAS OF LATE GROWN CONSIDERABLY FOR TWO REASONS: FIRSTLY, THE LEFTISTS' CAMPAIGN AGAINST THOSE SPD MEMBERS WHO HOLD MORE THAN ONE LUCRATIVE PUBLIC FUNCTION (VERFILZUNG) WILL HIT MAINLY THE MODERATES; SECONDLY, ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS IN THE PAST, THE LEFTISTS DID NOT FULLY HONOR INTRA-PARTY MUTUAL UNDERSTANDINGS (DEALS). ACCORDING TO BUNDESTAG DEPUTY CLAUS GROBECKER (A DELEGATE), THE MODERATES IN THE BREMEN SPD ARE EXPECTED IN THE FUTURE TO WAGE A MORE VIGOROUS FIGHT AGAINST THE GROWING LEFTIST INFLUENCE IN THE PARTY. THEY EXPECT TO FIELD THEIR OWN CANDIDATE FOR THE CHAIRMANSHIP IN 1980.

4. BUERGERMEISTER KOSCHNICK, WHO DOES NOT BELONG TO EITHER PARTY WING, BUT CONTINUES TO EXHORT AGAINST INTRA-PARTY SQUABBLES, DID NOT RUN THIS TIME FOR ANY OFFICE. SCHIFFMAN

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